



# Memorandum

**TO:** PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** Stephen M. Haase

**SUBJECT: MAJOR ISSUES IN THE  
FALL 2004 HEARINGS ON  
GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS**

**DATE:** November 17, 2004

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Approved

Date

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Council Districts and SNI Areas: Citywide

## **BACKGROUND**

This memorandum presents an overview of the Fall 2004 Hearings on proposed General Plan amendments and the main policy issues they raise. This is the last of four sets of hearings held this calendar year on proposed General Plan amendments.

## **ANALYSIS**

The proposed General Plan amendments highlight two important issues that the City continues to address in land-use decision-making:

1. Housing Opportunities and
2. Industrial Land Conversion.

During the Fall 2004 Hearings, the Planning Commission and City Council will be considering up to sixteen General Plan amendments. If the City Council were to approve all the pending amendments, the General Plan's residential holding capacity could increase by as much as approximately 1,900 dwelling units. Many of these housing units would be at a density of at least 20 dwelling units per acre, located near Light Rail Transit stations and neighborhood-serving commercial centers.

This potential increase in housing units would, however, result in a trade-off for the City — the permanent loss of industrial land. Of the approximately 74 acres of industrial land under consideration for conversion during the Fall 2004 Hearings, approximately 48 acres are proposed to be converted to residential uses, and 6.7 acres are proposed for neighborhood-serving public park land. The remaining 19.6 acres are proposed for conversion to commercial uses. The net effect is the loss of approximately 1,380 jobs.

### **Housing Opportunities Study Phase III Amendments**

Five General Plan amendment proposals that are being considered during the Fall 2004 Hearings signify the culmination of the Housing Opportunities Study Phase III (HOS III). In January 2000, the City Council directed Planning staff to conduct the Housing Opportunities Study (HOS). The HOS is modeled on the successful Housing Initiative Study that was completed for the Guadalupe Light Rail Transit Corridor in April 1991. The HOS is a proactive approach to facilitate increased housing production, support transit with appropriate development intensities, and further the City's longstanding policy of infill development. The HOS seeks to identify specific vacant or underutilized parcels, particularly within or near Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Corridors that would be suitable for higher density or mixed-use development. These TOD Corridors include Guadalupe, Stevens Creek Boulevard/West San Carlos Street, Santa Clara Street/Alum Rock Avenue, Winchester Boulevard, Capitol Avenue/Expressway, and the Vasona Light Rail Transit line.

The HOS has three phases, with each phase evaluating different TOD Corridors. The first phase, which focused on the Capitol Avenue/Expressway TOD Corridor, was completed in 2001. Phase II focused on the Stevens Creek Boulevard/West San Carlos Street and Santa Clara Street/Alum Rock Avenue TOD Corridors. Phase III is focused on underutilized lands near existing Light Rail Transit stations and future BART Station locations throughout San Jose.

Planning staff had originally selected thirteen candidate General Plan amendment sites for analysis (see attached location map), and the HOS III Environmental Impact Report includes environmental review for all thirteen sites. In response to feedback from other City departments, as well as from members of the public, and individual Council District's offices, Planning staff withdrew six of the proposed amendments and deferred two to future hearings next year. The specific reasons are explained below.

1. At the Housing Opportunities Study Phase III EIR scoping meeting held January 21, 2004, general concerns were raised regarding the need for more public outreach, the potential loss of small businesses and jobs from conversion of employment lands to housing, potential nuisances and inadequate open space to serve new residents, increased traffic, and over-reliance on public transit. Written correspondence on these issues from members of the public was also received by Planning staff. Based on these comments, and on feedback from the office of Council District 5, Planning staff withdrew from further consideration one proposed General Plan amendment, File No. GP03-05-05, located on the northeast corner of Story Road and McGinness Avenue (2811 Story Road), commonly referred to as the Mervyn's site.
2. Based on discussions with staff from the Office of Economic Development (OED) regarding preserving areas designated Combined Industrial/Commercial and other industrial sites in the Midtown area for commercial opportunities, Planning staff withdrew four of the six proposed General Plan amendments (File Nos. GP03-06-03, GP03-06-04, GP03-06-05, and GP03-06-06) in the Midtown area (District 6) during the Draft EIR comment period.

3. In response to public comments made during the General Plan community meetings held on October 6 and 7, 2004, and in coordination with the Council District 10 office, File No. GP03-10-02, a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC) to Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC) on a 14.4-acre site located on the northwest corner of Blossom Hill Road and Blossom Avenue, was deferred from the Fall 2004 Hearings, and staff will continue to analyze more appropriate land uses for the subject site.
4. In response to public comments received by Planning staff and stated at the Five Wounds Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Neighborhood Advisory Committee (SNI NAC) meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup> regarding the importance of preserving local businesses in the area of the proposed General Plan amendment, staff withdrew File No. GP03-03-13, which was a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Light Industrial to Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC) on 3.4 acres and Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC) on 3.5 acres on a 6.9-acre site located on the southeast corner of Julian and 27th Street.
5. Based on the pending status of the Planned Development zoning application for the Berryessa Flea Market site and the BART master planning effort, Planning staff decided to defer from the Fall 2004 Hearings File No. GP03-04-08, a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Industrial Park to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) on a 13.5-acre site located on the north side of Berryessa Road, west of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

The five remaining HOS III General Plan amendment proposals that are being considered during the Fall 2004 Hearings include: GP03-04-07, GP03-06-01, GP03-06-02, GP03-06-07, and GP03-06-08.

- GP03-04-07 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC) to Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC) with a Floating Public Park/Open Space designation on a 2.5-acre site located on the south side of Berryessa Road, east of Jackson Avenue.
- GP03-06-01 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Light Industrial with Mixed Industrial Overlay to High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) on a 7.05-acre site bounded by Highway 87, Curtner Avenue, and Canoas Gardens Avenue.
- GP03-06-02 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Public/Quasi-Public (2.8 acres) and Office (2.1 acres) to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) on a 4.9-acre site located on the southeast corner of Curtner Avenue and Canoas Gardens Avenue.

- GP03-06-07 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Combined Industrial/Commercial to Public Park/Open Space on a 6.7-acre site bounded by Auzerai Avenue, Sunol Street, West Home Street and Los Gatos Creek.
- GP03-06-08 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Heavy Industrial to Industrial Park on a 5.1-acre site located on the northwest corner of Savaker Street and Sunol Street.

### **Industrial Land Conversion**

In addition to the industrial land conversion proposed by three of the five HOS III General Plan amendments described above, six privately initiated General Plan amendments being considering during the Fall 2004 Hearings propose conversion of industrial-designated sites. These privately initiated amendment proposals include: GP03-03-15, GP04-03-02, GP04-03-03, GP04-04-04, GP03-07-09, and GP03-07-10.

- GP03-03-15 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Light Industrial to Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC) on 7 acres and Public Park/Open Space on 1 acre on an 8-acre site located on the west side of Highway 101 between Sunny Court and Kelly Court (commonly known as the Sorrento/San Jose Cheese site).
- GP04-03-02 is a request to a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Light Industrial to Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC) on a 7.6-acre site located on the northeasterly side of Campbell Avenue, approximately 1,000 feet northwesterly of Newhall Street. Instead Planning staff is recommending a Land Use/Transportation Diagram change from Light Industrial to the High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC).
- GP04-03-03 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Light Industrial to High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) on a 10.2-acre site located at the intersection of Campbell Avenue and Newhall Street on the northeasterly side of Campbell Avenue and the northwesterly side of Newhall Street.
- GP04-04-04 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Industrial Park with Mixed Industrial Overlay to High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) on a 4-acre site located on the southwest corner of North Capitol Avenue and Autumnvale Avenue.
- GP03-07-09 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Industrial Park with Mixed Industrial Overlay to High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) on a 6.2-acre site located on the southeast corner of Senter Road and Needles Drive.

- GP03-07-10 is a request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Industrial Park to General Commercial on a 19.6-acre site located on the north side of Story approximately 720 feet southwesterly of McLaughlin Avenue.

Staff has analyzed these proposed General Plan amendments for consistency with the criteria established by the “Framework, as a Guideline, to Evaluate Proposed Conversions of Employment Lands to Other Uses.” Individual reports on these amendments describe our recommendations. It is important to note that there is a finite inventory of industrial land remaining in the City of San Jose, and that if this land converts to residential uses, the opportunity for employment uses on that land would be lost. With this consideration in mind, City staff decided to withdraw three of the proposed HOS III General Plan amendments (File Nos. GP03-06-03, GP03-06-04, and GP03-06-06) involving the conversion of industrial land to residential uses.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

For the Fall 2004 amendments, staff held community meetings on October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> to obtain public input regarding the proposed changes. Property owners also received a notice of the public hearings to be held on the subject amendments before the Planning Commission on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>, and December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004 and City Council on December 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The Department web site contains information regarding the General Plan process, amendments, staff reports, and hearing schedules. This web site is available to any member of the public and contains the most current information regarding the status of the amendments.

Additionally, staff hosted Environmental Impact Report (EIR) scoping meetings for all the proposed General Plan amendments that rely upon EIRs for environmental clearance. For the proposed General Plan amendments that are part of HOS III, staff held a community organization roundtable discussion on March 30, 2004. Invitees included interested citizens and neighborhood organization leaders and contact people. Staff presented proposed General Plan amendments for sites located in Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) areas to the SNI Neighborhood Advisory Committees. Neighborhood community meetings were held for the privately initiated amendment proposals with the File Nos. GP03-03-15, GP03-05-10, GP04-03-03, and a community meeting is planned for the privately initiated amendment proposal File No. GP04-03-02.

The property owners within the proposed General Plan amendment site boundaries and property owners and tenants within a 1000-foot radius of the amendment sites, as well as community association representatives and other interested stakeholders, were sent a public hearing notice regarding the time, date and location of the Planning Commission and City Council hearings. Specific public comments received on the proposed amendments are documented in the individual staff reports.

### **COORDINATION**

The information contained in the staff reports was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, Department of Transportation, Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, Airport, Department of Public Works, Fire Department, Police Department, San Jose Redevelopment Agency, Housing Department, Office of Economic Development, and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

STEPHEN M. HAASE, AICP, DIRECTOR  
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## HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES STUDY - PHASE III

